

What is claimed is:

1. A method of allocating to communication units transmit time slots in a communication channel that implements a pseudo-token, ping-pong channel access protocol wherein a receiving unit obtains the right to transmit on the channel with the receipt of a data packet, comprising the steps of:

allocating reserved time slots to communication units based on QoS requirements associated with the communication units, wherein the pseudo-token is automatically assigned to a communication unit during its reserved time slot;

assigning priority levels to communication units transmitting on the communication channel; and

interrupting the pseudo-token based channel access scheme when a communication unit's reserved time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of allocating reserved time slots to communication units further comprises the step of:

receiving, at a master unit, an access request from a slave unit, wherein the access request includes QoS parameters requested by the slave unit.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of allocating reserved time slots to communication units further comprises the step of:

allocating a maximum packet size to communication units based on QoS requests from the communication units.

4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of allocating reserved time slots to communication units further comprises the step of:

assigning time offsets between the reserved time slots allocated to communication units.

5        5.        A method according to claim 1, wherein the priority level assigned to a communication unit is based on the QoS requested by the communication units.

10       6.        A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of interrupting the pseudo-token based channel access scheme comprises passing the virtual token to the communication unit which had its transmission time slot overridden.

15       7.        A method according to claim 1, wherein a communication unit forfeits its right to transmit on the communication channel when its reserved time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.

20       8.        A communication system, comprising:  
              a plurality of communication units, the communication units having a transmitter for transmitting data packets on a time slotted communication channel and a receiver for receiving data packets on the time slotted communication channel, wherein one of the communications units acts as a master communication unit for implementing a pseudo-token, ping-pong channel access protocol wherein a receiving unit obtains the right to transmit on the channel with the receipt of a data packet;

              the master communication unit including:

25        a module for allocating reserved time slots to at least one of the communication units based on QoS requirements associated with the communication units, wherein the pseudo-token is automatically assigned to a communication unit during its reserved time slot;

a module for assigning priority levels to communication units  
transmitting on the communication channel; and

a module for interrupting the token-based channel access scheme  
when a communication unit's transmission time slot is overridden by a transmission  
5 from a higher priority communication unit.

9. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein the master  
communication unit assigns reserved time slots based on QoS parameters requested  
by a slave communication unit.

10. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein the master  
communication unit assigns a maximum packet size to slave communication units  
based on QoS requests from the slave communication units.

11. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein the master  
communication unit assigns time offsets between the reserved time slots allocated to  
communication units.

12. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein the master  
communication unit assigns priority levels to slave communication units based on  
the QoS requested by the slave communication units.

13. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein the master unit  
interrupts the virtual token-based channel access scheme when a communication  
unit's transmission time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority  
communication unit.

14. A communication system according to claim 13, wherein the master unit passes the virtual token to the communication unit which had its transmission time slot overridden.

5 15. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein a communication unit forfeits its right to transmit on the communication channel when its reserved time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.

10 16. A communication device for communicating over a communication channel that implements a pseudo-token based access scheme wherein a receiving communication device obtains the right to transmit on the channel with the receipt of a data packet, comprising:

a transmitter for transmitting data packets directly to other communication devices on a time-slotted communication channel;

15 a receiver for receiving data packets directly from other communication devices on the time-slotted communication channel; and

a controller for controlling access to the time-slotted communication channel during a communication session with another communication device wherein the controller includes:

20 a transmission time slot allocation module for allocating reserved time slots to at least one communication device based on QoS requirements associated with the communication devices, wherein the pseudo-token is automatically assigned to a communication unit during its reserved time slot;

25 a priority assignment module for assigning priority levels to communication devices transmitting on the communication channel; and

a token assignment module for interrupting the token-based channel access scheme when a communication device's transmission time slot is overridden

by a transmission from a higher priority communication device.

17. A communication device according to claim 16, wherein the transmission time slot allocation module allocates reserved time slots based on QoS parameters requested by a slave communication unit.

18. A communication device according to claim 16, wherein the controller assigns a maximum packet size to communication devices based on QoS requests from the communication devices.

19. A communication device according to claim 16, wherein the transmission time slot allocation module assigns time offsets between the reserved time slots allocated to communication devices.

20. A communication device according to claim 16, wherein the priority assignment module assigns priority levels to communication devices based on the QoS requested by the communication devices.

21. A communication device according to claim 16, wherein the token assignment module interrupts the pseudo-token based channel access scheme when a communication device's assigned transmission time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.

22. A communication device according to claim 21, wherein the token assignment module passes the pseudo-token to the communication unit which had its transmission time slot overridden.

23. A communication device according to claim 21, wherein the token assignment module forfeits a communication unit's right to transmit on the communication channel when its reserved time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.

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24. A computer program product for controlling communications over a communication channel that implements a pseudo-token based access scheme wherein a receiving communication device obtains the right to transmit on the channel with the receipt of a data packet, comprising:

10 computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code means embodied in said medium, said computer-readable program code means including:

15 computer-readable program code means for allocating reserved time slots to at least one communication device based on QoS requirements associated with the communication devices, wherein the pseudo-token is automatically assigned to a communication unit during its reserved time slot;

computer-readable program code means for assigning priority levels to communication devices transmitting on the communication channel; and

20 computer-readable program code means for interrupting the token-based channel access scheme when a communication device's transmission time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication device.

25 25. A computer program product according to claim 24, wherein the transmission time slot allocation module allocates reserved time slots based on QoS parameters requested by a slave communication unit.

26. A computer program product according to claim 24, wherein the controller

assigns a maximum packet size to communication devices based on QoS requests from the communication devices.

27. A computer program product according to claim 24, wherein the  
5 transmission time slot allocation module assigns time offsets between the reserved time slots allocated to communication devices.

28. A computer program product according to claim 24, wherein the priority  
10 assignment module assigns priority levels to communication devices based on the QoS requested by the communication devices.

29. A computer program product according to claim 24, wherein the token  
15 assignment module interrupts the pseudo-token based channel access scheme when a communication device's assigned transmission time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.

30. A computer program product according to claim 29, wherein the token  
20 assignment module passes the pseudo-token to the communication unit which had its transmission time slot overridden.

31. A computer program product according to claim 30, wherein the token  
25 assignment module forfeits a communication unit's right to transmit on the communication channel when its reserved time slot is overridden by a transmission from a higher priority communication unit.